

Library Notes

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go there because we know enough about the association by now. . . .

I am going to let you decide what you want to do with this letter. We thank all those who make it possible to send letters and in this way give us the privilege of sending and receiving letters from our relatives. I also thank you, Teacher, for being willing to go through all the trouble of copying my letter and sending it to our relatives in Engwierum. Whenever I can do something for you, let me know. Write as much and as often as you wish. . . .

SJOERD AUKES SIPMA
JANTJE DEVRIES

LIBRARY NOTES

By LIDA L. GREENE

When I think of summer, 1965, I hope I shall always remember the morning John Smith came by to tell us he was making the long-hoped-for trip to Dakota. You would like John. He is young, with football shoulders, and he has this *thing* about Indians—mostly Sioux Indians.

He can talk for hours about winter counts and the Sun Dance. Now he was going to see the Medicine Pipe, sacred symbol of the seven (Sioux) council fires. Only four or five other white men have been invited to sit with the Guardians of the Pipe in the presence of the great *Mystery*.

"I think I'm a little sad," John confessed. I nodded. It would be the sadness of old splendors, long dimmed, to look upon the naked Pipe, the mystique of an ancient people.

I keep thinking, "John Smith will be back this fall and then we'll know."

* * * *

For several weeks the Drake University seminar men sat at our long tables. They were having a go at Iowa politics—

Progressive period, 1900-1915. What effect, if any, they wanted to learn, did the Progressive movement have on issues of the day—woman suffrage, the temperance drive, anti-pass legislation for railroads, the co-op growth in the processing and marketing of agricultural products. Boxes of Cummins papers were trundled down from Vault 11; volumes of *Proceedings of the Woman's Temperance Union* came up from basement storage; woman suffrage records were in use for days. If a librarian may have a viewpoint, the study was over far too soon. We were just beginning to find out things about that anti-pass law. One thing we learned. Just put a book in storage and it will be called for the next week. It's positively uncanny. We thought about that as we carried the *Proceedings* back to the basement.

* * * *

There was a whole host of especially eventful days. The Ralph Longleys of Grinnell came by on the hottest afternoon of the year carrying a Gold Rush journal and a scrap of diary containing a prudent listing of the household items that an 1856 bride brought to her new home and husband. She had a tin teapot, that bride. I've yearned for a tin teapot ever since.

Other occasions brought a series of Civil War letters written by a homesick soldier, eight huge boxes of genealogical records from Iowa-born Marie Perrin Lemley, an early plat map of Pella, a collection of Philippine pictures made memorable by the lean, young Blackjack Pershing at the battle of Bacolod.

* * * *

One of the truly memorable things about this past summer was the growing realization that there is a *Great Migration in reverse*. More and more Iowans are joining in the back-trailing process. Once the Migration was geared to Conestoga and the river flatboat. Today, it is station wagon and camp trailer. A century ago the way led west. Today, it is east and south to sleepy court houses, ragged little burying grounds, and libraries from Maine to Georgia. Yesterday, the *land*. Today, the men and women who came from afar to plant in the West the seed of the future.

This new breed of trail breakers knew where they were going long before Dad's duffle bag came down from the closet shelf. Someone telephoned to ask where the best libraries could be found. Maps were marked, towns were starred for stop-overs, notes along the margins read, "Look for Blairs here. I think this is the place Jeremiah met Nancy." These migrants would cover in one day's travel the territory their forefathers had crossed in a generation or more.

The Sneddens headed for New England. The Wyatts pinpointed Ohio and New York. Farmer Eppard waited till the corn was laid by and then struck out for that valley in Virginia he knew as well as the palm of his hand. These and the others came home in triumph. They had found a birth record, taken a picture of a farmstead, discovered a third cousin who knew all about that voyage to America and the port of entry. No 49'er was ever more pleased with his first gold strike.

* * * *

All this is to say Genealogy has a new look. There are adult education courses in resources and techniques for do-it-yourself historians. Iowa has four organized county societies and a brand-new state organization headed by George E. McCracken, Ph.D., Associate Editor, *American Genealogist*. By the time this comes to hand, Volume I, No. 1 of *Hawkeye Heritage* will have made its appearance.

Of course, someone is still going to tell you that genealogists are little old ladies in velvet cloche hats who have a passion for Plymouth Rock and Yorktown. *Don't ever believe it!* The all-American six-footers that come into our Library would not fit that description at all.

Genealogy is *in*. Definitely *status*. Or maybe this is a new phase of our pioneering, exploration in depth of the making of America.

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